REMARKS

This Preliminary Amendment is being concurrently filed with a Request for Continued Examination for the above-identified patent application. In this Preliminary Amendment, no claims have been canceled or added. As such, claims 1-10 and 28-32 will be pending in this application.

I. Objection to Claim 28

In the Final Office Action dated 2/17/05, the Examiner objected to claim 28 as being dependent on a canceled claim. Applicant's have amended claim 28 to address the Examiner's objection thereof.

II. Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

In the Final Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 6, 8-10, and 28-32 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. patent 5,951,651 issued to Lakshman, et al. (hereinafter Lakshman) in view of U.S. patent 5,983,270 issued to Abraham, et al. (hereinafter Abraham). The Examiner also rejected claims 5 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lakshman in view of Abraham and in further view of "Official Notice." Applicant's respectfully traverse these rejections.

Applicant's submit that neither Lakshman nor Abraham, alone or in combination, teach or suggest each limitation of amended claim 1. Specifically, the cited references do not teach or suggest:

> receiving a new rule;

examining the new rule to determine if the new rule specifies a new dimension; and

if it is determined that the new rule specifies a new dimension, adding the new rule to the set of rules, adding the new dimension to the N dimensions, dividing said set of rules along N + 1 dimensions, dividing each of said N + 1 dimensions into rule ranges using said set of rules, and generating a set of possible rules for each rule range in each of said N + 1 dimensions.

Even when combined, Lakshman and Abraham do not teach or suggest the above limitations of claim 1. This is due to the fact that the packet filtering method of Abraham does not relate to filtering based on different dimensions of a packet. Rather, as disclosed in Abraham, the filter executive 76 sets various rule ready flags, the filter engine 78 reads new rules sets and, depending on the action flag for each rule, either add the rule to the filter engine's rules sets, replace the rule from the filter engine's rules set or delete the rule entirely from the filter engine's rules sets (column 45, lines 23-37). As such, the packet filtering method of Abraham does not teach or suggest examining the new rule to determine if the new rule specifies a new dimension, and, if it is determined that the new rule specifies a new dimension, adding the new dimension to the N dimensions, as required in claim 1. In Abraham, there simply is no need for such extra steps in its packet filtering method since its method is not based on dimensions of a received packet.

Lakshman does not cure the deficiencies of Abraham in teaching or suggesting these limitations of claim 1 as Lakshman does not address adding new rules to the set of rules. Therefore, when combined, Lakshman and Abraham do not teach or suggest examining a new rule to determine if the new rule specifies a new dimension and adding the new dimension to the N dimensions if it is determined that the new rule specifies a new dimension, as required in claim 1.

As such, Applicant's submit that claim 1 is allowable over Lakshman and Abraham. Claims 2-10 and 28-32 are dependent on claim 1 and allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the rejections and objections is requested. Allowance is earnestly solicited at the earliest possible date.

Respectfully submitted,

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